Indian Diaspora Policy and the 'International Triad' – Of Voices and Visions beyond Pragmatism

Bobby Luthra Sinha

Abstract

This work aims to explore and problematize India's discourses on its Diaspora policy vis-à-vis the reflections and experiences of actors on the ground. Historically, the Indian state has been known to project a founding and pioneering discourse on Diaspora closely connected and inter-twined with its foreign policy. Nonetheless, in its international outlook just as India continues to change and evolve over time, so do its Diaspora discourses and practices as per the needs of its foreign policy. From being distantly neutral and adopting diplomatic routes of concern for Indian origin people abroad during its early post-Independence outlook, India's Diaspora policies have turned volte-face by shifting to the foreground of its global profiling in more recent times. Three important agents responsible for this role reversal are represented by the forces of globalisation, transnational geopolitics and Diasporization, acting in tandem with each other. Referring to these three as the, 'International Triad', (a term I employ as a heuristic tool), I undertake a qualitative analysis through review of literature, primary data including newspapers and ethnographic interviews conducted by me. It is clear that in its pro-active positioning and emerging Diaspora relations, India is no different from many other countries. Conversely, Indian Diasporas too have come a long way, emerging as not only key drivers in development efforts but also in strengthening bilateral ties between host and home nations as other diasporas do. No longer bereft of voice and rights, as much as in previous political contexts, the PIO and Diaspora communities stand on firmer ground while interacting with their home countries and ancestral homelands. However some vulnerabilities and status

issues may still remain open despite the prismatic implications of the International Triad. The questions that therefore arise are: how do members of various Indian Diasporas assess the 'everyday' of this emerging relationship? Conversely, how responsive and compassionate is India to the qualitative expectations of its Diaspora?

Keywords: Indian origin Migrants, International Triad, Globalization, Geopolitical dynamics, Diasporization and Indian Diaspora policy

Part I Introduction - Themes, Qualitative Methodology and a Hermeneutic Tool
Migrants of Indian Origin, Globalization and Diasporization
In this study, I focus on Diasporization and its associated dynamics with respect to, primarily, India's diaspora and foreign policy as well as the corresponding transformations in global geo-political and economic spaces. Next, I while retaining a critical focus on India's changing policies towards its Diaspora in recent times, I take into account how Indian Diaspora has correspondingly become attractive for many a state policies bordering the frontier of foreign affairs, as opposed to compulsions of politics in the imperial-colonial eras (Mahajani 1976: 2). For building on my arguments and analysis, I propose an analytical category, namely, 'International Triad' to refer to the three forces of globalisation, geo-politics and Diasporization acting in tandem with each other. Finally, casting an emic gaze inside this International Triad, employing qualitative research methods, I sift out issues and themes that are raised at the everyday point of contact between the state and Indian origin migrants.

World statistics on migration demonstrate how Diasporas have converted into a rapidly proliferating genre of life. The new UN dataset, 'Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2015 Revision', shows that the number of international migrants has grown faster than the world's population. As a result, the share of migrants in the global population reached 3.3 per cent in 2015, up from 2.8 per cent in 2000. There are, however, considerable differences between large regions of the world. In Europe, Northern America and Oceania, international migrants account for at least 10 per cent of the total population. By contrast, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, fewer than 2 per cent of the population are international migrants.

However, despite the different statistics and trends, both in the western as well as the eastern contexts, the geopolitical movement and importance of the Diaspora has been growing rapidly. For instance, UN data of 2015 shows that 244 million people, or 3.3 per cent of the world's population, lived outside their country of origin (UNFPA: http://www.unfpa.org/migration). India too has a long history of migration and one of the largest migrant communities in the world. As per UN (2016) findings, sixteen million people from India were living outside of their country, thus making the Indian Diaspora the largest in the world.

Changing Global, Geo-political Connotations of Diaspora and Diasporization

Writings on Diaspora make clear how the concept has gained traction in multiple settings and for many groups defined linguistically, genetically, ethnically, nationally, or in terms of their religious affiliation. However, unlike in the past, when for centuries the word Diaspora stood defined as dispersal or persecution (Brown 2006: 3-4; Kokot *et al.* 2004; Brah 1996), the term now denotes a plurality and network of memories, practices, communities, powers, futures and aspirations not confined to one place, rather endowed with transnational connotations. Not describable only by transnationalism (Voigt-Graf 2005), *per se*, Diaspora remains subtly and crucially distinct from it. Where diaspora is concerned with intangible socio-cultural identity construction through processes of migration, transnationalism predominantly relates to socio-economic relationships grounded in recurring cross-border movements (Kokot *et al.* 2004). The convergence/interchange of the terms 'Diaspora' and 'transnationalism' (Olwig 2004: 55) often occurs as globalising processes have precipitated an 'intensified and deepened cultural, economic, political and institutional interconnectedness and interdependency that has developed between corporations, communities and states, particularly since the 1970s' (Walton-Roberts 2004:54).

Two aspects need to be sifted out. Owing to transnationalism, Indian origin people and migrants may be often clubbed in the same category but they do not pertain so. Next, India, that has had one of the world's most diverse and complex migration histories, is as much face to face with the escalating dynamics of globalisation, transnational geopolitics as both its Diaspora and Indian origin communities are. Ethnic Indians have established communities

on every continent as well as on islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific and Indian oceans since the 19th century. The composition of flows has evolved concomitant with time, changing from mainly indentured labour in far-flung colonies to post-war labour for British industry to high-skilled professionals in North America and low-skilled workers in the Middle East. In addition, ethnic Indians in countries like Kenya and Suriname have migrated to other countries, a movement often termed as, 'secondary migration' (Naujoks 2009).

In light of its vast spread and reach, while scholars have argued the case of a 'global Indian Diaspora', nonetheless, viewing the Indian Diaspora[1] as any homogenous entity is (Friesen 2008: 46) nothing short of problematic. In this respect, Singh (2003: 4-5) makes an important point, 'what possibly distinguishes the Indian diaspora from its counterparts is its extreme heterogeneity, diversity and in some cases, a persistent localism – a plurality'. Furthermore, since 1990s, with the development of air transportation, communications, web technologies and networking, the physical limitations of distance are increasingly eliminated. This has rendered Diasporas more close knit than before and made it easier for them to exercise their collective identities from one place into another. Globalisation of services and opportunities in this respect has promoted a certain geo-spatial dynamics which also leads to unleashing different kinds of transnational spaces which conglomerations such as Diasporas have known how to break through (Chen & Collins 2014) and use for their purposes of reaching out to the homeland. The changing world has not spared the Indian diasporas who are more proximal to each other, virtually and really than ever before.

Age of 'Diasporization' and Diasporas as 'Third Force'
The above mentioned interplay of global communications, information and

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[1] Some works assert that the term "Indian diaspora" (Naujoks 2009) refers to all persons of Indian descent/origin living outside India, as long as they preserve some major Indian ethno-cultural practices. Only people of Pakistan and Bangladesh are excluded from this term since those countries were part of the larger British India before 1947 and thus constitute a special case. A common distinction with regard to ethnic Indians outside India, often referred to as overseas Indians, is made between non-resident Indians (NRIs), who hold Indian citizenship, and persons of Indian origin (PIOs), who do not.

mobility flows of our current age including the Internet, influence Diaspora consciousness as they open new possibilities wherein immigrants and their descendants can maintain closer ties with their homeland or ancestral countries. In this way, has taken shape a phenomenon that, in his book, 'Political Demography', Ellipses Paris (2007) calls 'Diasporization'. That is to say that yesteryear immigrants communities with various histories have become informed Diasporas of today and aspire to play greater roles than were earlier perceived of them. Besides, a newer aspiring class of migrants imparts an economic and political performance oriented entry point to the idea of Diasporas in a globalised world.

Dumont (GRFD Newsletter 2013) argues that there is a growing need to understand the importance of studying the geopolitical role of Diasporas/migrants in contexts of globalisation. Diasporas can be viewed as a viable 'third actor' in geopolitical relations. Diasporization has meant that the Indian Diaspora (considering its communicative functionality and transnational affiliations to both the home as well as the host countries) has emerged as almost a viable non-state actor, in recent times[2]. With the advancement of Diasporization amidst globalizing economies and changing transnational geopolitics, states and policy makers have not hesitated to reckon with the power of connectivity and discursivity of this, 'third force'. This force influences the attitudes and aspirations of the home country, experiences conflicts and cooperation with its host societies, and contributes to the functioning of the international networks which are central to our world (Sigona 2015).

Methodology and the Use of a Hermeneutical Tool

Where a growing Diasporization is significant of intensifying socioeconomic, political and cultural ties with their origin countries (Kuschminder & Hercog 2011), yet this does not connote the end of the story. Newer developments have not only, not erased earlier issues and considerations completely but have also

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[2] On the emergence of Global state and non-state actors in various internationally relevant governance and policy related domains and areas as well as their implications see, Conor Kelsey and Coolidge (2013); Hirst and Thompson (1996); Bayly (2004); Held and McGrew, with David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton (1999).

given rise to newer ones, a few of which this paper elaborates. It goes without saying those ancestral pasts, images of the home country and its silted memories (Connerton 1989) continue to live in through the corporeal collective consciousness and praxis of a Diaspora (Cohen, Story & Moon 2015). Nevertheless the actual point of contact may have a separate political feel to it. Whether in the shape of journeys back to the ancestral homeland or growing interactions/ encounters with its representatives, policy makers and officials in the host country (or elsewhere), newer terrains of problems necessitate a newer outlook towards solutions within this International Triad.

To make a thick anthropological contribution towards that end, my paper was therefore conceived with collection and analysis of both emic and etic data (Agar 1982 & 1996; Russel 2002; Geertz 1973). I have used both primary (field based) and secondary sources (published) ranging from interviews, field work, newspaper articles, reports and statistical data. My interactions with the members of diverse Indian origin migrants and Diasporas in Argentina, Austria, Ghana, Germany, South Africa and Switzerland over five years from 2011 to 2016 have served as the background of this research and the analytical terminologies forwarded through it, such as, the 'International Triad'. Further, I found it useful to define the migrant actors that I interviewed as, 'Indian origin Migrants' as they came from a variety of backgrounds such as highly skilled and knowledge migrants to semi-skilled labour and secondary migrants, besides pertaining to diverse cateogories of migrants spanning both from the contemporary (old and new) well as the historical Indian Diaspora while others clearly belonged to the PIO communities.

My data undermined the need to explore with ethnographic criticality, the day to day interactive zones or formal spaces of contact wherein the Indian state and Diasporas encounter each other. Hence I extend the term, 'International Triad' as a hermeneutic tool. The main goal of Hermeneutic approach is to explore and analyse the lifeworld (see Lebenswelt in Habermas 1990a and 1990b; *Britannica* and *Merriam Webster*).

Part II Implications of the 'International Triad' - Globalisation, Transnational Geopolitics and Diasporization

In this part, I elaborate how the Diaspora reaches out to India even as the country makes a move to spruce up its foreign policy as per the forces of

Diasporization and transnational geo-politics in a globalised era. Geographical markets, globalisation with increased competition and on top of all management of global mobility (The Deloitte Strategic Moves Survey of 2012) are key to understanding how integrated world markets, networks and technologies have all lead migrants students, professionals and families to form intriguing agents of change (Deloitte 2013). Observing from within the lens of the above stated developments, contemporary and historical migrants embody at least two kinds of changes:

First, yesteryear's Diasporas (historical groups of migrants such as the indentured labour and their descendants) have become pro-actively assertive and organised in their identities and emerging roles just as the states of their host societies come of age. *Second*, newer Diasporas have emerged to claim more economic and political spaces within host societies. Together these two changes have begun to form an assertive threshold for globalisation, transnational geo-politics and Diasporization, even it may be as 'returnees' or when belonging to smaller regions of the world[3]. Diasporas, big or small; historical or contemporary, are increasingly shaping national and international priorities in fields that matter to them (Luthra Sinha 2014), such as reaching out to their home countries or ancestral homelands, now that they have more voice in their own soil

Correspondingly, post liberalisation in 1990s, Diasporas for countries as India have become more special than before (Parmeswaran 2015). In effect, several policy statements made by Prime Minister Nehru in the forties and the fifties in and outside Parliament contained the basic principles to govern India's attitude vis-a-vis the Indians overseas (Mohan 2015) through the contours of its foreign policy doctrines. He maintained that the overseas Indians should decide whether they would continue to 'remain Indian nationals or adopt the

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[3] Conway and Potter (2007) in their research regarding return migrants to the Caribbean islands assert that, 'for many contemporary small island societies undergoing rapid change and transformation, modernisation, and integration into the wider global economy, today's younger and more youthful return migrants are no longer an ineffective demographic cohort. Despite their numerically small size, many are demonstrating they can be influential "agents of change". No longer mere returning retirees, they are more diverse, in terms of age, life-course transitions, class and gendered social positions, family networks, and migration histories'.

nationality of the country of their domicile'; 'If they opted for the former', he stated, 'all that they could claim abroad was most favoured alien treatment' (Sahadevan 1995: 4). Nehru added: 'certainly, we do not like any country to ill-treat Indian nationals or to give them a place which is lower than that of others' (Parekh 1993: 10); 'If they opted for the latter' (i.e. foreign nationality), he maintained, 'They should be given all rights of citizenship. India's connection with them will be cultural and not political' (Leonard 1999 103).

Significantly, the Nehruvian (idealist) principles by and large continued to govern India's approach towards the Indians overseas even after his death (Mathews 2001: 5). Encouraged to integrate with host cultures, they fought for the liberation of their adopted lands. It was in the post-cold war years when India's international outlook and foreign policy staged a volt face. Liberalisation and globalisation became the new pragmatic space in which many nations and cultures encountered each other internationally, including India and its Diaspora. Post-liberalisation, India changed tracks from and began to dovetail its policies and expectations towards the Indian Diaspora as per changing time. New structures and institutions were put in place to aid the transition from the Nehruvian idealism of a bygone era to the pragmatism of the contemporary times. Indian Diasporas were also turning a new leaf in this phase. They demonstrated spectacular success in their chosen professions and careers while at the same time retained their emotional, cultural and spiritual links with India. This evoked reciprocal chords and curiosities in the hearts of Indian people as well (see Brown 2006; Blunt 2007; Brah 1996; Chaturvedi 2007). Leading to the creation of strategic know-hows and imaginaries the Indian origin migrants and communities have been building on, competing in as well as completing, what I refer to here as the, 'International triad' consisting of globalisation, transnational geopolitics and Diasporization acting in juxtaposition with each other.

Drawing from the active support and increasing interactions with the Diaspora communities, the Government of India High Level Committee (MEA Website: HLC 2000) Report, in its final recommendations suggested the formation of an organisation on the lines of the Planning Commission to look after the affairs of the Overseas Indians. However the then Prime Minister of India decided to have a full-fledged Ministry of Overseas Affairs headed by Minister of state with independent charge to deal with affairs related to Overseas Indians (MEA 2004). Foreign policy gestures from India towards overseas Indians acquiescently indicated how these groups were seen as a

valuable bridge of understanding between India and their country of domicile (Bhat & Sahoo 2000).

Qualitatively, Indian government stresses ethnicity to court the Diaspora, as well as relies for its propagation through its changed nationality law, which in 1987 shifted from *jus solis* (nationality based on country of birth) to *jus sanguinis* (nationality based on parentage) (Lum 2012; BJP News Report 28th and 29th December 1999), thus sealing the deal in favour of Diapsorization by the close of the 20th Century. Though certain hiccups arise while delivering its policy in practice at the cutting edge of mutual contact, India promises to sensitise its government structures, bureaucracies and staff time and again. The High Level Committee (HLC, MEA Website: 2000) for instance, recommended prioritization in assisting the setting up of Special Economic Zones exclusively for projects emanating from NRIs and PIO. Establishment of a fast track mechanism in dealing with complaints and grievances keeping in view the high incidents of fraudulent practice vis-à-vis NRI bank accounts (refer to, HLC Report 2002: Chapter 38) was also lobbied for.

Policy-wise, initiatives to engage the Diaspora have multiplied at both the central government and state level, way more than in the beginning of India's independent status in 1947 (Mohan 2015). At the national level, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA: http://www.moia.gov.in/show info1.asp?linkid=133)[4], established in 2004, conceived a number of special programmes for overseas Indians. The primary task of the MOIA was to connect the Indian diaspora with its motherland. On grounds that substantial work of the MOIA is performed by the Indian missions abroad, recently, the decision has been taken by the Government of India to merge it with the MEA (Ministry of External Affairs). As a result the PBD (Pravasi Bharatiya Divas), which used to be a flagship event of the MOIA was celebrated instead by the MEA on January 9, 2016 (see TOI: 8 January 2016 for details).

The extent to which the Indian origin migrant communities and globalisation are intertwined (see Boyle 2009) is exposed by the bourgeoning relationship that Indian government has developed/strives to develop with the Indian origin migrants. Since the early 1990s the Indian government became increasingly aware of and involved with its Diaspora, formalising its

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[4] Initially called the Ministry of Non-Resident Indians' Affairs, its rapid name change within a year of its inception reflected the desire of India to tap the resources of its entire Diaspora, and not just Indian nationals resident abroad.

commitment and connection through a series of policies (Voigt-Graf 2005; Sahoo 2006). What is being witnessed therefore is how the International Triad has steadily led India towards a strong convergence of its Diaspora policy and foreign policy placating, in the process the embedded role of Diaspora in foreign affairs (Muni 2009).

Part III Bottlenecks and an Etic Detour: A 'Realism', post-Realism?

How Realistically does India Woo its Diaspora?

The beginning of India's foreign policy and the Nehruvian take on Diaspora and Indian origin communities was part of the country's idealism, as I have mentioned earlier. Those were the days of Non-Alignment and Panchseel. However the contemporary pragmatic[5] approach to policy and Diaspora is often criticised as materialistic and opulent, even though the post-cold war realism is welcomed by many (Miller & De Estrada 2017). India's current Foreign secretary (quoted in Parmeswaran 2015) opines that as of now India has made five 'innovations' in the way it has been using the tools of statecraft to further a proactive foreign policy through techniques as building of narratives; lexicon and imagery; soft power; the link between foreign policy and national development, and finally the Indian Diaspora. Narendra Modi, the current Indian Prime Minister announced new measures aimed at transforming India into the 'land of dreams' for diasporic investors (Mandhana 2014) soon after taking oath. In doing so, he continued to build upon shifts in the Government of India's Diaspora and PIO policies. These envisage structural economic reform with the (re)making of overseas Indian populations into a de-territorialised global citizenry (Raj 2015 as quoted in Dickinson 2015.) However, in terms of politicking and trade relations, even though there has been positive change, a number of problems persist.

First, there is often a perception that the Indian government gives

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[5] A 'pragmatic' foreign policy implies a rejection of India's earlier reliance on Nehruvian 'idealism' or 'moral posturing' and instead a focus on extension of power and material interests. Many argue that 'idealism', that was indelibly associated with the premiership of Jawaharlal Nehru, led to major foreign policy failures as well as the entrenchment of redundant policies.

greater importance to the more affluent sections of the Diaspora, consisting of business houses and those with white collar jobs. A few such problems have been articulated by Diasporas (see Luthra Sinha 2014) through the Pravsi Bharatiya Associations (Association of PIO or/and Non-Resident Indians). The *next* problem with India's Diaspora policy that is on a quantitative fast track, is that while NRIs are given attention, individuals who migrated from India generations ago, also known as persons of Indian origin as in their respective countries, i.e the PIO may only feel partially involved and represented in such an association (Maini & Ramaswamy 2014). *Finally*, viewing the Indian Diaspora as a predominantly strategic asset and a means (Roy & Banerjee: 2007; Kapoor 2003; Gordon and Gupta: 2004; Wei: 2005), depicts an etic bias rooted in a distantly structured policy of development and (BJP) ideology (Miller & De Estrada 2017).

The innuendo is that even when India woos its various Diasporas/ Indian origin people as a strategic asset and a means[6] without touching upon an identity and soft power politics, the path needs to be chartered in more universal tones and practices of affiliation. Undoubtedly, the Indian Diaspora's remittances (highest in the world) in the past have been of vital assistance to Indian foreign exchange reserves. The challenge now is to go to the next stage — of harnessing not just financial but also intellectual capital, opines Singh (2017) who prescribes that for this to happen India needs to adopt a non-jingoistic and secular tone . The emic thrust of the Diaspora and PIO communities itself, as I analyse in the next sections, differs as they also anticipate a growing qualitative association with India, over and above business relations or 'homeland tours'.

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[6] It is not surprising that from earlier association of fragmented and dispersed entities in search for a homeland whether in memories or culture or territorial desires, Diasporas are now conceptually and in the realm of practice somewhat different. They not only search but also build a transnationally relevant form of 'meeting' their homelands in creative exchanges. Diasporas are now a means, sought by their homeland. The convergence of the terns diaspora and transnationalism, though two different concepts has come about because of globalising processes particularly since the 1970's (Walton-Roberts 2004; Kokot *et al.* 2004).

Part IV Indian Origin Migrants and Communities: Voices, Visions and Vulnerabilities

From the above discussion it is clear that the International Triad of globalisation, transnational geo-politics and Diasporization has India steadfastly in its grip, at both the ends: The country is undergoing an explicit 'Diaspora moment' diplomatically. Indian origin migrants and Diasporas in turn are riding high on the wave of 'home-bound' or 'ancestral motherland' oriented investments, ventures and remittances and relationships. The willing participation and demands of the Indian Diaspora w.r.t to trade opportunities, and provisions being accorded to them by the GOI since the close of the 20th Century strengthen the emic imaginary towards their country of origin/ancestral homeland, as the case may be. A critical reading of India's engagement with its Diasporas through the lens of the international triad reveals some pitfalls and patches alongside positivity. As far as opportunities and breaking of the barriers is concerned both India and its Diaspora have begun to weave a new interactive ground. Qualitatively speaking, in the Indian context, for instance, these group have not only promoted the formation of transnational spaces (see Luthra Sinha: 2013) and global networking (Luthra Sinha 2014) but also created various kinds of discursive dialogues in the process (Luthra Sinha 2015).

Beneath a labyrinth of positive developments, also lie some uncomfortable questions and memories. *How challenging could it be for India to avert an elitist bias or go beyond a samosa diplomacy at the cutting edge of mutual encounters*?, for instance,- are two common questions that Indian origin people I interviewed (Interviews and interactions overs email and in person 2011-2016) in Argentina, Germany, Ghana, South Africa and Switzerland typically postulate upon.

In the same breath they point out how for them, it's a matter of pride to be able to contribute as a non-passive part of India's soft power appeal. Yet various explicit and implicit challenges in the mutual relationship remain. The IYDs (International Yoga Day that the BJP Government has introduced as its selling strategy) still has no clear significance: Not all Indians/Indian origin abroad get attracted towards or practice yoga, *so who/what is this for? What is being sold or stated here?* A package of health; ideology; or tradition? No one seems to be sure at the receiving end (also see the analysis, in Miller & de Estrada 2017).

Dealing with memories and repercussions of the erstwhile Diaspora policies that bolstered isolation once upon a time represented an internal challenge for the Indian Diaspora and migrants of Indian origin. But now, as many of my informants clearly stated, there seems to be value in that idealist approach. Barring the ones in countries where a struggle for basic rights is still being fought, Diasporas are comfortably integrated with their host destinations or/ and new homelands. The exploitation and ill-treatment of Indian workers in the Gulf countries has always been a cause of concern in India's relationship with those countries. Yet the Diasporas themselves or India can intervene cautiously and only to an extent. Even though phenomena such as the coming to life of an International Triad has bestowed the power of critical dialogue between home and host countries, the Diaspora's have a succinct reckoning of the fact that current homelands remain the active ground where their identities (including, 'Indian-ness') and loyalties acquire the day to day meaning they yearn for (World Bank Data 2008 and *Economic Times* 2008).

Part V An Emic beyond Pragmatism

The PIO and Indian Diaspora communities have multiple historical origins, producing heterogeneous maize of geographical credentials. Migrations from India to South Africa, for instance took place from diverse regional backgrounds. One feature of this geographical complexity is the resulting multiplicity of South African Indians' religious and vernacular composition (variants of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity; and Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Hindi and Arabic linguistic communities). The Indian-origin population numbers some 1.3 million and stands approximately at 2.6% of the South African population (Statistics South Africa 2010; Ginwala 1985). Furthermore, South African Indians lost contact with family, kin and specific geographical origins in India as a result of the longevity of apartheid and diplomatic Isola-tion, the conditions of sea-passage and indenture. They dealt with a host of local challenges upon arrival in South Africa (Landy *et al.,* 2004 & Ebr-Valley 2001), which was for them the soil that they eventually claimed as their own.

Consequently, an ongoing sense of cautiousness over identity based isolation and minority issues led, at least early on, to outright resistance against MOIA Diaspora outreach practices. The extent to which Indians should consider themselves part of an Indian Diaspora and linked symbolically and materially to India as a diasporic homeland became a highly uptight subject of

debate (Dickinson 2015). Fatima Meer, in a speech at the 2003 *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas*, contested the idea that Indians in South Africa should feel part of a larger Indian Diaspora: '[Diaspora] is a word I abhor … We, Indian South Africans, have had to struggle hard to claim our South African-ness and that is something that we jealously guard. We are not a Diaspora of India in South Africa because we claimed South Africa for our own' (Meer 2003).

Can India Move beyond the Apathetic Assumptions that Surface behind its Staff Officialdom and Red Tape?

This was another question that my -informants in South Africa and other countries such as Argentina, Austria, Ghana and Switzerland would ask on grounds of anonymity. Looking from India with a distant gaze, yes, all people of Indian origin are PIO or NRI or settled or yet struggling Diasporas. But mirroring the perspective from the Diaspora and PIO gaze itself, paints a different picture. It is this that the Diasporization aspires to bring out in the emic everyday encounter between state (representatives of India) and society (the diaspora and PIO actors). Every kind of Indian migrant community needs a nuanced response of place and time[7]. While some need a closer recognition and protection from India (for recent evacuation operations, see Xavier 2017), others are already at a stage of well-established life worlds and identities. Some overseas Indians or PIO groups or individuals maintain a careful political distance from their ancestral homeland; others may strive to come closer.

One aspect that is remarked upon singularly and runs common in every interaction and open ended interview (10 each in Argentina, Austria, Germany, Ghana, Switzerland) that this author conducted concerns the unfriendly and haughty manner in which Indian Diplomatic and consular staff conducts itself while serving in their official capacities. Behind the opulence of its grandiose policy declarations and diaspora perceptions, lies a dark area of high-handedness and bureaucratic weight throwing in Indian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates overseas.

Actors across the Indian Diaspora communities in Argentina, Austria, Germany, Ghana, South Africa and Switzerland echo the same sentiment. A

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[7] For example, Singh (2010) points out the continued use of the term 'Indian expatriate' in recent South African political speeches even though most PIOs were born in South Africa and consider it their home.

regular experience shared with this researcher was that there were blatant malpractices, and discourteous attitudes to queries, needs and problem solving in the performance of everyday consular or diplomatic tasks. From covert demands of 'palm-greasing' (especially while processing OCI renewals or grant of Visa requests) to not answering the phones in official hours, the list is endless. The high diplomacy of the MEA in wooing the elite and commercial Diaspora falls flat in a plethora of low diplomatic practices while disposing off workload concerning the common man or (Chandra 2017) those with no 'approach' or 'connection'. It is therefore not surprising that in 2015, Press Trust of India spoke of complaints against 43 officials of Indian diplomatic missions in 17 countries who were facing a variety of charges including corruption and dereliction of duty (Dawn 2015).

Contrasting the above stated lacunae with India's actual policy manoeuvres brings us to an incredible gap between presentation and reality. Diaspora is an entity full of charm, on paper at least. No state visit abroad seems to be now complete without validating and reiterating India's inclination to pursue its Diaspora. In his state visit to the United States, PM Modi asked Indian origin people in America to participate in India's development, saying their contribution was part of his vision for a 'people's movement for development', modelled, as he said, 'on Mahatma Gandhi's mass movement for freedom from British rule' (see Mandhana 2014). Outlining his image of India, he promised to '*fix*' the things that have long frustrated Indians living abroad, from unclean streets to unending official paperwork. He announced visa relaxations that would allow members of the community to travel to India more easily.

Can Modi, however, 'Fix', the Qualitative Relationship between Representative Officials and the Diaspora?

Phrased in foreign policy terminology, the question would be that as India fast-tracks it's Diaspora, PIO and overseas Indians related procedures, why in the first line of contact (the everyday sphere) does this clientele remain an aggrieved lot? Usual complaints vis-a-vis the functioning of Indian Diplomatic offices relate to poor condition of the visitors' waiting areas, harassment of applicants by calling for uncalled-for documents, procrastination, non-availability of exact amount as change to pay passport/visa fees, refusal to attest

documents, rude behaviour by reception/ security/ consular staff, delays in processing of passport/visa applications, fraudulent issue of passports, unfair termination of services of local staff, financial irregularities, service staff related problems and sexual harassment (*Indian Express* 18 September 2016).

For instance, difficulty in connecting through telephones as phone calls take long to get answered is a general day to day complaint; even the hierarchical and conceited behaviour of high ranking Indian officials in High Commissions and Embassies abroad is a regular grudge among the Diaspora actors. Many Indian origin people narrate how delay and raising of hurdles in paperwork constitutes one of the major problems in the daily zone of contact. Upon a request for sharing experiences, the actor informants sent me in hordes of anecdotes and incidents compiled in emails. In such an ironical situation, Diasporization of the foreign policy may indeed seem like a fairy tale phenomenon.

Aggrieved Diaspora actors state that many an embassy staff adopts a biased attitude while assessing the needs and aspirations of the Diaspora towards their homeland. Even while delivering simple administrative services, these officials operate with a punishing attitude that the overseas Indians are not to be 'trusted' for they had 'left' the country of their origin to explore greener pastures elsewhere [8]. The pain of many such experiences is relegated, when officials explain how, Diasporas perpetually bicker amongst them and remain divided (Interviews with High Commission Officials in Buenos Aires August 2013; Durban January 2014).

It is also not uncommon to find many Indian Embassy/ High Commission officials brandishing their position of power and prejudice to state that overseas Indians only approach the missions in pursuit of calculated, material gains (data based on group discussions with PIO, NRIs, and Expatriate communities). However, going by the number of cultural, religious, philanthropic and socially relevant activities (reminiscent of India) which are undertaken by the Indian Diasporas in the aforementioned countries, these sweeping generalisations are certainly discriminatory and farfetched

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[8] These are some findings based on author's field work on changing relations between India and its Diaspora taken up in Argentina, Austria, Ghana, Germany, South Africa, and Switzerland. Data shared pertains to information taken on grounds of anonymity from Indian communities living in Accra, Basel, Bern, Buenos Aires, Durban, Loerrach, and Vienna between 2011-2016.

assumptions. Homepages and web links of Overseas Indian organisations and of all kinds of Indian origin migrants embody a zealously cultural inclination. Moreover, an archaic and bureaucratic world-view certainly does not add any feather in the cap of the current government, which continuing the trend of past two decades, is diligently and busily wooing the Indian Diasporas internationally. On the contrary, it just shows how much work needs to be done on the ground (which is the precise point of everyday contact between India and its Diaspora) by the Government of India. Diplomatic and non-diplomatic India based staff, who operate with the air of, 'self-recruited custodians of mother India' may do well to understand while they remain honourable representatives of their country, Diasporas and PIO do share and have complex claims to the same homeland as them.

It is not surprising therefore that complaints about diplomatic and non-diplomatic staff at times go on to acquire an official tone. MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) received serious complaints against 23 India-based employees in embassies abroad in the last 10 years, with officials recalled to India in four cases. These are further corroborated through evidence coming in from many other countries: For instance, in 2012, six complaints were acknowledged in total, against Indian missions in UK, Zambia, Kenya and Mauritius. This increased to 10 in 2013. There was, however, a big jump in 2014 - with 27 cases of complaints (*Indian Express* September 2016)[9].

With a government that has made Diaspora outreach as a key foreign policy objective, such incidents and instances remain an eyesore. Nonetheless, Indian Embassies and High Commissions have made special attention to engage with the expat community over the recent years with a strong focus on substantive issues (*Economic Times* 29 June 2015). One of them relates to tapping into Diaspora aspirations rather than looking at the overseas Indian's

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[9] The highest number of five complaints each, were against the Indian missions of UK and Madagascar, with three each against embassies in Kazakhstan and Kenya. Indian missions with two complaints only were in Botswana and Mali. Last year, in 2015, there were single complaints filed against Indian embassies in Afghanistan, Austria, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Netherlands and Thailand. Even if all these complaints do not pertain to a Diaspora- GOI interaction zone or the quotidian everyday exclusively, they do substantiate the overt and covert voices of NRI and PIO communities on the basis of which this the research design and data collection for this paper was formulated and undertaken.

as distance, faraway people who/ whose ancestors had left the country. Thus we see how owing to the emergence of the Diasporas as a third force between the realms of foreign policies as well as transnational trade relations, there is a closer interaction between the state, markets and overseas Indians. In such a socially networked support system that rests in and completes the International Triad, both advantages and disadvantages have undoubtedly become visibly operational as taken up in the discussion above.

Part VI Summing up

In a world of multiple and overlapping jurisdictions and allegiances, of cascading cultural and economic differences and mergers, India's mutually communicative and interactive build up with its Diaspora's brings on the following insights.

Firstly, by injecting newer meanings into the greys between state and non-state actors, it does seem very likely that the Diasporas in general will continue to make the world polity and economy polycentric and transnational. The creation of a mutually accessibly discursive space between the multiple actors further implies that the words and actions of one actor directly influence the powers and positions of the other and vice-versa. Thus creating a tight, mutually addressed juxta-positional prism of a variety of actors.

Secondly, the Indian case, in particular, helps in understanding how globalising state and foreign policies need and make use of their various Diasporas innovatively. It also shows how formal structures and actors have opportunities to pioneer policies as much as respond with expertise to path breaking emergent and contingent situations with non-state actors. It is up to India to linger behind or straddle onto the International Triad with an eye on quality and quantity, both.

Thirdly, this juxtaposition of state and non-state actors completes an intensely competitive and three dimensional discursive field, that I have referred to as the 'International Triad' in this paper. This space then, full of systems and meanings may represent, reflect upon, follow, reject or even replicate domains of dialogue both old and new. Additionally, imitating and inspired from Diasporas and various streams of migrants, this International Triad as a space becomes replete with systems of memories and aspirations, both 'here' and 'there' as well as of 'then' and 'now'.

Lastly, it can be detailed that while states are the opening point for

analysing world politics, they are no longer the single most important one. The growth of non-state actors in the International Triad has meant more diversity in potential players and partners. The proliferation of actors that are legitimately representing stakeholders and contributing concretely to contemporary global problem-solving means that we may have come a long way from the state-centric model of traditional international relations and politics.

Taking the above analysis into consideration, Diasporization certainly represents a broadening of horizons. But as a word of caution, India needs to take the current dynamics on with a pinch of salt. A hyped, homogenised engagement with Diasporas and PIO could be self-limiting and jeopardising for foreign policies and migrant peoples. As I analyse in this paper,- any intent in homogenizing the meanings of Diaspora to any fixed notion could leave a room open for contestations, bilateral friction and claim making on both (home and host) ends.

On the contrary, construction of mutually meaningful discursive politics could bring on a liberating international dynamic. It is well known that Indian Diasporas not only conceive material interactions with their homeland, but also construct their imaginaries around it through their life-world of silted memories, expectations and cultural denominations. Moreover, locally in their adopted/new homelands too, Indian Diasporas have gone on to enact socio-political (qualitative and identity based) and economic (quantitative and trade based) roles much beyond their ancestral/ original homeland related selves. In doing so, the Indian Diaspora demonstrates the creation of pathways for the 'glocal' to merge and emerge in transnational spaces. If India can tap, traverse through and balance the qualitative implications of Diaspora with its quantitative ones, it could very well emerge as an artful negotiator of the International Triad and a role model for world politics.

sharing their views on status-, labour- and mobility-related issues and experiences with India-based officials abroad.

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Bobby Luthra Sinha
University of Basel
Switzerland
bobbyluthra@gmail.com